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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #0238 09/22/00

~ Complete Antic Library ~ People Are Talking! ~ FalcAMP Upgrade!
~ Qualcomm Laptop Gone! ~ Atari AUN Auctions! ~ Rebellious Nullsoft!
~ King Book Honesty Drops~ The New (ME) Millenium ~ STemBoy For Atari!
~ Unconventional 2000! ~ PlayStation2 Games! ~ Pentium 4 Next Month!

-* Germany Won't Tax Internet! *-

-* AOL Refutes Instant Messaging Rivals *-
-* Web Privacy Tools Detailed in Senate Guide *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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For a change, life at work this past week hasn't been too "painful" to handle. While the news wasn't the best (healthcare premiums skyrocketed, budget is still a major issue, etc.), the stress levels were actually low for a change. Well, there's always next week!

Summer is officially over and I turned 49, both in the same week! My wife and I closed the pool last weekend; it seemed like yesterday that we opened it! Would you believe that neither of us used it this year?! It did get some limited use by friends, but we just never seemed to get a good opportunity for a relaxing swim. Next year should be better. Turning 49, I guess I'm on the brink of officially being old! <grin> And I remember when turning 30 was considered old! I can't believe that this is my 25th college reunion; or that Woodstock was over 30 years ago! Sheesh...

Well, let me hobble over to my rocking chair, contemplate the summer that we seemed to have missed, and figure out where all the years went!

Until next time...

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Complete Antic Magazine library Now on the Web

The Digital Antic Project (http://www.atarimagazines.com) is proud to announce that the full text of every issue of Antic Magazine is now available on the Web. Devoted to the Atari 8-bit and ST computers, Antic magazine published 88 issues from April 1982 through July 1990.

This site launched with two issues on July 27, 1996. More than four years later, the project's volunteers uploaded the final issue. The site includes 1,700 articles, 2,400 images, and 1,600 downloadable program files, using more than 100 MB of disk space. More than 30 volunteers have contributed time to the project.

Although the Digital Antic Project has reached an important milestone, the effort is far from over. The volunteers have already begun digitizing two more magazines published by Antic Publishing: STart, which focuses on Atari ST computers; and Antic Amiga Plus, which focuses on the Amiga platform. (People interested in donating time or magazines to the cause are encouraged to send e-mail to savetz@northcoast.com.)

--Kevin Savetz
Curator of the Digital Antic Project

FalcAMP Upgrade & CAST Plugin

StGhost and Splash of Sector One has made a new major upgrade to FalcAMP. It can now stream mpeg-music from internet and play it in real time.

Works with any Falcon030, stock or with accelerator cards. (CT1,CT2,Nemesis and AB040 all tested and known to work).

Also supports optional external audio clock. Requires a STiK compatible TCP/IP stack for internet radio use. (STiK/STiNG,GlueSTiK)

http://deunstg.free.fr/sct1/falcamp/

Atari Auctions on Atari-Users.Net

The Auction area on Atari-Users.Net is now Re-Opened!!
Now you can include an image of the auction item.

Rob@atari-users.net
http://www.atari-users.net
--
Atari-Users Network
Atari Chat, Forums, Links, Webring, Classifieds and Auction.
http://www.atari-users.net

New Gameboy Emulator for ST

Bodo Wenzel announced on the ATOS site the release of his program STemBoy, a Game Boy emulator for the ST. It’s an open source GPL project.

http://apollo.spaceports.com/~bodo4all/atari/stemboy.htm

Unconventional Downloads

The 8-bit software/demos released of the Unconventional 2000 show are available for download, as well as photos of the event.
http://unconventional.atari.org

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

For the first time since A-ONE began publishing, there will be no "People Are Talking" column this week. Joe was finally "cornered" with his mouth open and not able to utter a word. Some major root canal work has left our Atari newsgroup columnist in no mood to listen to people talking! <grin> Stay tuned next week when I'm sure Joe will relate his agonizing experience!

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - PlayStation2 Games! 'Orphen'!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" 'Sky Odyssey'! 'Tony Hawk'!
ESPN MLS Game Night!
And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Orphen: Scion of Sorcery to Launch
Simultaneously With the PlayStation2

Activision, Inc. announced that Orphen: Scion of Sorcery will launch on October 26, 2000, day-and-date with the new PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. The DVD-based game is being developed exclusively for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system and will take full advantage of the system's technological and graphical advancements to deliver crisper, cleaner graphics and a more immersive gameplay experience. Orphen: Scion of Sorcery will be one of the first action role-playing games available at the launch of the new hardware system and has been rated ''T" (Mild Animated Violence -- ''Teen" -- content suitable for persons ages 13 and older) by the ESRB.

Based on a popular Japanese anime television series, Orphen: Scion of Sorcery is set on the mystical Chaos Island and challenges players to escape by unraveling the island's many mysteries. As they embark on their quest, players assume the main role of Orphen and along the way will be able to play five additional characters and three different storylines each with unique challenges.

''Activision is firmly committed to maintaining its console market share by having two titles tied closely to the launch of the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system -- Orphen: Scion of Sorcery and Sky Odyssey," states

Ron Doornink, President and COO, Activision, Inc. ‘‘Orphen: Scion of Sorcery’s rich story driven gameplay and breathtaking graphics set the stage for the game to be a stand out action role-playing game for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system."

Developed by Shade, Inc. and produced by Kadokawa Shoten and ESP, Orphen: Scion of Sorcery immerses players in a fantastical story in which they must run, climb and jump through a variety of beautiful environments including underground caverns, giant castles, and dark forests. As they travel through the game, players will encounter 30 different stunningly detailed monsters and nine bosses, each with their own unique attacks and strengths and weaknesses. The action-packed gameplay is laced with hundreds of puzzles and secrets that challenge players to utilize over 30 spells and weapons. Additionally, beautiful anime movies further enhance the game’s compelling storyline.

Activision Announces Sky Odyssey as Second Title for PlayStation2 Computer Entertainment System

Activision, Inc. announced that it has acquired the North American publishing rights for Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.’s action-adventure flying game, Sky Odyssey for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Sky Odyssey, which will launch with the first wave of titles for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, joins Orphen: Scion of Sorcery as one of Activision’s premier titles for the new platform.

Utilizing the technological advances of the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system to deliver sharp detail, accurate physics and deep horizons, Sky Odyssey places gamers in spectacular aircraft from the past and present. Easy to learn but difficult to master, the game challenges players to complete a variety of action-packed missions that include such feats as refueling while atop a speeding train to landing on aircraft-carriers on the open seas.

‘‘We are proud to continue our association with Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc. with Sky Odyssey. The title will be one of the handful of games available for new PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system during the holiday season," said, Ron Doornink, president and COO, Activision, Inc. ‘‘Sky Odyssey takes full advantage of the hardware’s advanced technological and graphics capabilities, and is the only true flight game for the new platform."

Sky Odyssey allows players to soar into the wild blue yonder, braving ever-changing weather conditions as they earn their pilot’s wings. As they undertake over 40 diverse and challenging missions, players must master and complete such varied objectives as flying through underground caverns and into a mine pit, rescuing a wayward hot air balloon and flying through waterfalls. As they complete the missions, gamers will be retrieving missing pieces to an ancient map; the completed map will lead to the game’s final destination. As they fly across massive detailed 3D maps, from tropical islands to perilous mountain peaks, players will take the controls of more than 10 different types of aircraft, including several hidden ones. Each of the aircraft, from the Sword Fish Mk. I Biplane to the stealth jet and the F4U Corsair, has it’s own distinct handling. The game rewards players for increasing their flying skills by allowing them to win performance-enhancing upgrades and fully customize their aircraft’s appearance and flight dynamics.

Adding to Sky Odyssey’s replay value are five different gameplay modes -- Adventure Mode, Free Flight, Sky Canvas, Target Mode and Training Mode -- that allow virtual pilots to perfect their navigational skills. In Sky Canvas Mode, players use a smoke generator to draw pictures in the sky, while in Target Mode they practice their accuracy by flying through targets suspended in the air.

THQ Ships ’Buffy the Vampire Slayer’ for Game Boy Color

THQ Inc. announced the release of ‘‘Buffy the Vampire Slayer" for Game Boy Color. Licensed by FOX Interactive and developed by GameBrains the game is based on the television phenomenon, ‘‘Buffy the Vampire Slayer," and is now available at major retail outlets nationwide.

‘‘’Buffy the Vampire Slayer’ has continued in its popularity on the WB network year after year; with over 4 million viewers a week, it ranks No. 3 among all other WB shows," said Germaine Gioia, vice president, licensing, THQ. ‘‘We’re excited to bring the same pulse-pounding action to ’Buffy the Vampire Slayer’ fans of all ages onto the Game Boy Color."

‘‘Buffy the Vampire Slayer" for Game Boy Color allows players to explore eight familiar environments from the show including the Old Mansion, the Sunnydale Zoo and the Cemetery. As Buffy, players fight demons and destroy vampires. The game also features story sequences that allow the player to interact with characters from the show’s cast including Willow, Xander, Anya, Giles, Cordelia and Angel.

Additionally, Fox Interactive has previously announced that they are publishing a ‘‘Buffy the Vampire Slayer" game for the PlayStation, Dreamcast and PC gaming platforms. Developed by Southern California-based The Collective, the ‘‘Buffy the Vampire Slayer" games will be available in Spring 2001.

Activision’s Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater2 Rides Onto Store Shelves on September 20, 2000

The ultimate skateboarding game is back -- bigger and better than before -- with the release of Activision, Inc.’s Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater2 for the PlayStation game console. The sequel to last year’s blockbuster console title, Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater, the game resets it’s own standard with its innovative gameplay. Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 2 will be available at retail stores nationwide beginning September 20, 2000 and has been rated ‘‘T" (Mild Animated Violence and Mild Language -- ‘‘Teen" -- content suitable for persons ages 13 and older) by the ESRB.

Additionally, Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater has been selected for inclusion in Sony Computer Entertainment America’s ‘‘Greatest Hits" series, which features the best-selling PlayStation game console titles ever. As part of the series, Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater will be repackaged with the ‘‘Greatest Hits" green stripe and will carry a suggested retail price of $19.99. The ‘‘Greatest Hits" title is slated to hit retail shelves in North America beginning the week of September 18, 2000.

‘‘Activision established itself as a leader in the action-sports category with Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater. To date, we have shipped more than two million copies of the game worldwide, and expect that the game’s popularity will continue to grow as part of the ’Greatest Hits’ series. Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater has remained on NPD’s TRSTS top-10 best-seller list since it’s debut last October," stated Dave Stohl, executive producer, Activision Studios.

Stohl added, ‘‘The release of Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 2 reaffirms Activision’s commitment to creating high-quality, cutting-edge action-sports games. Not only does Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 2 expand on all the ground-breaking features of the original, the game clearly sets a new benchmark for the action-sports genre."

Developed by Neversoft Entertainment, Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 2, allows players to skate with the skills of Tony Hawk, the most legendary pro of all time, or as one of a ‘‘dream team" of 12 pros including Bob Burnquist, Steve Caballero, Kareem Campbell, Rune Glifberg, Eric Koston, Bucky Lasek, Rodney Mullen, Chad Muska, Andrew Reynolds, Geoff Rowley, Elissa Steamer and Jamie Thomas.

Featuring a comprehensive roster of pro skaters, an intuitive control scheme, an innovative skatepark editor, total character customization and enhanced skating physics, Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 2 delivers the most authentic and cutting-edge skateboarding experience of all time. The game’s increased number of tricks and combinations -- including manuals, new grabs, grinds, inverts and lip and nollie tricks -- challenges players to master new skills as they work their way up the skateboarding ranks.

Adding depth and replayability to the game is the most advanced skatepark editor ever attempted in a video game. The real-time 3D editor allows gamers to build their own dream parks from scratch. Players can see exactly how their park will look in the game as they plot out a course using a variety of parts -- ramps, rails, obstacles and quarterpipes. Once a level is laid out, it can be saved to a memory card and shared with friends. Additionally, a total character customization feature allows gamers to modify the pro skaters’ clothing and trick sets, or build an entirely new character from scratch.

Players can ollie and grind in a variety of international real world settings, including skateparks and locations in New York, Marseille, and Philadelphia. Each environment is littered with secret areas, short cuts, ramps and interactive objects allowing players to trick off of just about everything in sight.

Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater 2’s offers a variety of multi-player modes via two-player split-screen including a brutal tag mode, trick attack, graffiti, HORSE and two player free skate. A replay mode allows players to view highlights of each run. Additionally, the game contains the first playable demo of Mat Hoffman’s Pro BMX the most cutting edge and freestyle BMX gaming experience.

Activision Signs New Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking Title for Game Boy Color

The #1 miniature selling die-cast toy bike series, Road Champs BXS, is set to ride onto the Nintendo Game Boy Color when Activision, Inc. releases Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking this holiday season. Gamers and trick-stick

bike riders will experience the most vigorous freestyle BMX game ever for the Game Boy Color. Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking has been rated ‘‘E" (Everyone - content suitable for persons ages six and older) by the ESRB.

Developed by HotGen Studios, the game features an unprecedented 64 levels of stunt biking action and challenges players to test their high-flying skills on 27 different courses. Players select from eight BXS riders and pull off over 50 unique tricks from the four disciplines of freestyle BMX -- flatland, street, vert, and dirt. Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking also features four different modes of play including career, which lets players move up through the ranks, from amateur to pro as they attempt to win the ultimate title -- BXS Champion. Other single-player modes include single run, training and tournament.

‘‘We are excited to bring the #1 BMX toy license to the Game Boy Color platform," says Michael Pole, executive vice president, Activision Worldwide Studios. ‘‘Road Champs BXS trick-stick bikes from JAKKS Pacific have been top sellers since the franchise launched last holiday season. The strength of the license coupled with the exceptional talent of HotGen Studios will allow us to deliver the ultimate Game Boy Color BMX stunt biking game."

‘‘Activision and HotGen Studios are the perfect partners to launch the licensing program for our Road Champs BXS line," remarked Stephen Berman, president and COO, JAKKS Pacific, Inc. ‘‘Activision’s worldwide marketing power, together with the extraordinary video gaming expertise from HotGen, will drive the Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking Game Boy Color game at retail."

‘‘It has been wonderful working with JAKKS Pacific and Activision," said Fergus McGovern, CEO of HotGen Studios. ‘‘Together we are building a great gaming experience based around the BXS brand. We look forward to future games with this property."

Interplay Announces Wild Wild Racing for PlayStation2

Interplay Entertainment Corp. announced plans to release Wild Wild Racing, one of the most exciting racing titles available for next generation systems. Developed exclusively for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system, Wild Wild Racing allows players to compete in all-terrain vehicle races in various countries around the globe. Developed by Rage Software, Wild Wild Racing will be available for the North American PlayStation 2 launch in late October.

‘‘We are very excited to have Wild Wild Racing shipping during the PlayStation 2 launch window," said Brian Fargo, CEO of Interplay Entertainment. ‘‘Wild Wild Racing takes advantage of the advanced capabilities of the PlayStation 2 and furthers our commitment to develop and publish great console product."

Wild Wild Racing will feature five race locations: USA, India, Iceland, Mexico and Australia and utilizes the advanced PlayStation 2 graphic technology which allows for varied weather conditions, as well as, day and evening racing. Players will ‘‘strap into" one of nine specially designed off-road vehicles, with multiple upgrades and a total of 22 different handling models. PlayStation 2 owners will scramble up steep mountain passes, ‘‘kick up dust" in hot desert sands, while experiencing one of the

most exciting off road games ever produced.

In addition to the main off-road race circuit, Wild Wild Racing includes a series of special challenge features that allow the player to upgrade and access new vehicles. The game also features exhibition races and time trial modes, along with exciting new challenge modes including ‘‘Quest," ‘‘Skill" and the highflying ‘‘Stunt" mode which is the ultimate test as players launch into death-defying maneuvers.

Interplay Entertainment currently is developing a number of exciting new PlayStation 2 products including MDK2: Armageddeon shipping this Winter, and Run Like Hell shipping next summer.

For more information on Wild Wild Racing, please visit the official website at www.interplay.com/wwr.

3DO Ships Army Men: World War Land, Sea, Air for the PlayStation Game Console

The 3DO Company announced that it has begun shipping the Army Men: World War - Land, Sea, Air game for the PlayStation game console to retail outlets throughout North America and online shopping sites. A brand new triple threat set in the war-torn plastic world of the best-selling Army Men(r) series, the Army Men: World War - Land, Sea, Air game takes the ongoing battle to new fronts.

Previously fought on solo fronts, the Green Army’s battle for survival now takes on heroic proportions as players fight for freedom on the ground, vie for superiority in the skies, and initiate devastating naval strikes against the enemy in this all-new comprehensive conflict. Havoc reigns on a global scale, as the Tan Army mobilizes its forces for an all out assault on friendly territory. Brave Green grunts must man the trenches in the face of overwhelming odds to defend their country and honor through 3 campaigns set in the most remote parts of the planet, including steaming jungles, hostile waters, and desolate mountain passes.

Drastic times call for drastic measures, requiring recruits to redirect their energy into the use of unstoppable new vehicles such as the bomber, assault raft and battle carrier, which come loaded down with an virtually endless stockpile of never before seen special weaponry. Totally realistic AI now powers enemy forces, so prepare to give that gray matter a workout; it’ll take much more than a souped-up arsenal to lay hyper-intelligent opponents low. Plus one to two players will go gonzo for the enhanced multiplayer mode, which includes support for capture the flag games that feature multiple computer controlled enemy units.

‘‘Real world generals deserve to see the big picture in times of war, not just the individual conflicts upon which the history books are written," said Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company. ‘‘With the Army Men: World War series and Land, Sea, Air in particular, we’re expanding the scope of players horizons -- not just onto a global scale, but into the heavens, beneath the depths of the sea, and beyond as well."

ESPN The Games Scores a Goooaaaallllll With First Title for PlayStation ESPN MLS Game Night

ESPN The Games kicks away the competition with the release of ESPN MLS Game Night, the first ESPN the games title for PlayStation. Utilizing the highly-acclaimed soccer game engine and integrating the wit and insight of the Worldwide Leader In Sports, ESPN MLS Game Night allows players to use their favorite MLS star or customize their own player to pass, shoot, and score their way to MLS glory. Endorsed by Colombian sensation Carlos Valderamma of the Tampa Bay Mutiny, the game boasts a bi-lingual feature that offers play-by-play, in-text game, and menus in both English and Spanish. Capturing all the spirit and excitement of the world's most popular sport, ESPN MLS Game Night shoots into stores September 20th with a suggested retail price of $39.99.

GAME FEATURES

ESPN MLS Game Night is the first to include complete and updated rosters and stats for all 12 MLS teams, as well as 53 International teams. While competing in MLS or International style play, gamers are treated to authentic ESPN graphics and statistical information along with play-by-play commentary by ESPN announcer Bob Ley, and the distinct voice of Louis ''Gooooaaaallllll" Tapia. Other features of the game include:

* Award- Winning Game Engine
* New Create-a-Player Customization
* Innovative Game Play Options
* Unprecedented Team Management
* Bi-lingual for Spanish-speaking fans

Acclaim Brings Sega Enterprises' Smash Arcade Game F355 Challenge: Passione Rossa Home

Acclaim Entertainment announced that the company has distributed the Sega Dreamcast version of the highly-praised arcade racing simulation F355 Challenge: Passione Rossa to stores. The game features online components in addition to the popular racing modes of the original. Acclaim currently holds distribution rights for F355 Challenge: Passione Rossa in North America and Europe.

''Acclaim is pleased to have partnered with Sega to distribute this impressive racing simulation," said Evan Stein, Brand Director of Acclaim Entertainment. ''F355 Challenge has set a new benchmark for racing games, providing gamers with the true-to-life thrills of driving a Ferrari."

F355 Challenge is a highly realistic racing simulation featuring the F355 Challenge racing car. The game boasts extraordinarily smooth graphics, gorgeous circuit visuals and unprecedented car control. The game contains six circuits, all of which are accurately modeled, including stadiums with detailed graphics. F355 Challenge incorporates an in-depth training mode featuring an auto-braking system and voice and visual guidance. After the race is complete, players are given the data on their racing line, time, RPM, speed and gear selection.

F355 Challenge's Internet capabilities allows gamers to download competitors' race times via an Internet service provider. The races are accurately represented through the use of ''ghost cars." Anyone can log on to race, and up to 16 players can compete in the same race where the top

eight scorers advance. Gamers can store and maintain their network ranking scores in the Driving Data mode. Top ranking scores can also be uploaded to a server. Gamers can also compete in split-screen races by engaging in the Versus Play mode.

Replicating the thrills of its beloved arcade counterpart, F355 Challenge boasts several modes for single-player racing enjoyment, including: Arcade, a checkpoint style race similar to the original arcade version of F355 Challenge; Championship, where gamers compete for the combined highest score; and finally, Single Play, another arcade-style mode where the gamer is not restrained by time limits. The result is a game which attempts to bring gamers closer than ever before to experiencing the real thrill of F355 Challenge racing.

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->A-ONE Guest Column! - Microsoft "Sucker"?!

The New (MS) Millennium
By Donald A. Thomas, Jr. (c)2000
(http://www.icwhen.com)

Those who label me as a sucker are too frequently correct with their assertion. In spite of a lack of assumed fanfare, Microsoft launched Windows Millennium last week. Yes, those two statements go together like O.J.’s infamous courtroom glove test. I enthusiastically bought Windows ME and installed it on my home computer. Bottom line: I’ve earned my sucker badge all over again.

Other than annoying system crashes I am not able to readily defend my urge to own the latest version of Microsoft’s OS. As far as the crashes go, I always solve old problems while creating new ones. Of course I saved some money by buying the "promotional upgrade", but even that offer stung me quite a bit. You see, the upgrade is valid only for users of Windows ’95 or Windows ’98. The key here is that it doesn’t matter that you legitimately own these products; you have to be using them.

Several years ago, I found that my system needed a lot of upgrades to catch up to the times. So, I humbled myself, beseeched my wife to loosen the family purse strings and bought a new IBM Aptiva from Costco. (Yes, I know. The Aptiva was another act of a true suckerism.) At the time, it was exciting. I was up-to-date again with a Pentium II, generous RAM, sizable hard drive, nifty sound and I/O features like USB. But it wasn’t long that I discovered that upgrading a video card to a motherboard equipped with a built-in video card and a CD-ROM to a machine that didn’t even have the right bay doors for it was more than a nuisance. Eventually, I replaced the motherboard and the case. Now, only the primary hard drive is from the original Aptiva machine.

Then, with an impressive marketing splash, Microsoft launches Windows 2000. This promises to be the most impressive OS of all time. Rock solid. It never crashes. Well, word is that the proverbial "blue screen of death" (BSOD) has died. This OS, based on the NT architecture is so good, it is only recommended for professionals and businesses. I’m a professional. Wow. I’ve

got to get that!

Installing Windows 2000 forced me to grow up a lot. Many of my games were shelved and I had to wait months before peripheral suppliers such as Lexmark realized that a lot of Windows 2000 users wanted to connect their economical Z11. I learned a lot about drivers. I learned a lot about how companies support users of a "business-based" OS. I learned how Windows 2000 liked to set me up as multiple users. But, eventually and after about three complete installs, I flushed my system of residual Windows ’98 problems and was up-to-date with a product named after the year I was actually living in.

For the record, Windows 2000 does crash... BSOD and all. A lot. Mind you, I do run a lot of applications that are graphics intensive, but supposedly the system is designed to handle it and it usually does. Usually.

Along comes Thursday, September 14, 2000. Windows Millennium hits store shelves. I own Windows ’98 Second Edition through upgrades off my original installation of Windows ’98 from my Aptiva. I qualify for an upgrade saving about $50. Right?

My first disappointment is that Windows 2000 talked me into reformatting my C: drive in an NTFS format instead of a FAT 32. Without regard to what those terms may really mean, I knew I had to format my primary drive back to Fat 32. To accomplish that, I entered the BIOS set-up screen at boot-up and set the machine to boot first from CD-ROM. I then used my Windows 2000 disc to completely reinstall Windows 2000 using its hard drive set-up function to reconfigure the drive in the desired FAT32 format.

Now, mind you that Windows 2000 is Microsoft’s most recent OS release and without regard to differences in intended target market, it seems really strange that Microsoft’s most active customers cannot upgrade directly from one OS to another. That means I must now install Windows ’98 so that Windows Millennium will qualify me for the upgrade during the install process.

Installing Windows ’98 is a hassle, but it’s mostly just a matter of eating up time. Right? Wrong.

The Aptiva I own(ed) does not supply a Microsoft Windows ’98 installation disc, it supplies a system "Recovery Disc" with a licensed copy of Windows ’98 integrated into it. Remember that the original Aptiva does not exist in its original form. I upgraded the motherboard. That understandably means that IBM will not support me any longer, but does that mean I lose my rights to the copy of Windows ’98 that I legitimately own? Apparently yes because the Recovery Disc can tell that I am not using the original motherboard. It refused to install. IBM doesn’t care. Microsoft doesn’t either.

So, in a home where we own more than one computer, finding a Windows ’98 installation disc is not impossible. But it is odd that I we own all these Microsoft products and upgrades and I am being forced into a needlessly time consuming upgrade. I install my wife’s copy of Window’s ’98 on my machine and endure the entire installation procedure all over again. Read, write. Read, write, reboot. Read Write. Ahh, how I often long for an OS-built into RAM like my beloved 32-bit Atari home computers.

It took about 12 plus man-hours to upgrade to Windows Millennium. I didn’t experience any system crashes until CompuServe’s software refused to cooperate. Everything else loaded fine.

Now that it’s all said and done, I’m looking for all the new features I have. The package seems no different than my original Windows ’98

installation after it was updated by Microsoft's free downloads and updates. I did notice that the machine shuts itself off again when it is supposed to. For some reason I had to do that manually in Windows 2000. I also regained my dialer icon in the system tray that was lost during a recent Windows 2000 crash recovery. Other than that, I feel that I paid $50 for an unknown set of Windows '98 internal upgrades. I suspect mostly to fix original system bugs more than anything else.

The kitchen toaster still works... It has yet to show signs of needing an upgrade of any kind. I suspect if they offered one, I'd be a sucker and buy it.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Web Privacy Tools Detailed in Senate Guide

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch on Wednesday touted ''identity scrubbers," self-destructing e-mail and other online privacy protection tools as an alternative to stepped-up policing of the Web.

Releasing a consumer guide to state-of-the-art ways to curb personal data giveaways, the Utah Republican said protecting online privacy was a ''very hot issue and it's going to get hotter."

''We've got to find a way to live with it -- and that ain't easy," he said, referring to the lack of consensus in Congress over updating privacy laws for the digital age.

The 31-page handbook, ''Know the Rules, Use the Tools," says many consumers have the mistaken impression that their conduct on the Internet is anonymous.

In fact, the vast majority of Web sites collect ''personally identifiable information" from visitors, notably by placing electronic tags called ''cookies" on their hard drive, the booklet pointed out.

''Cookies" may store names, credit card numbers, e-mail addresses, shopping preferences and more based on technology that tracks Web surfing. Companies use such data for targeted marketing, customizing sites and gathering data for resale.

Once a ''cookie" is in place, the user's Internet browsing software checks each time a site is visited to see if relevant data has been stored on the computer's hard drive, speeding up the page downloads and tailoring them to suit.

More controversially, ''cookie technology could track and enable the sale of information regarding an individual's Internet research on sensitive matters, such as a medical condition," the handbook said.

Hatch, in a preface to the guide, said he hoped consumers "will be empowered to protect the privacy of their personal information in accordance with their individual needs" once aware of new tools like ‘‘cookie-cutters" that allow the rejection of unwanted tracking devices.

Likewise, he said he hoped consumers would demand ‘‘the level of privacy they desire from Internet businesses" once informed about the issues.

‘‘This would enable the marketplace, rather than burdensome government regulation to address privacy concerns," he wrote.

The guide, prepared by committee staff, was released at a "Privacy Technology Fair" in the U.S. Capitol that showcased many of the new products described in the booklet.

Among these were ‘‘identity scrubbers," or tools for surfing the Internet anonymously. In this category, the booklet listed products developed by Privada, Incogno SafeZone, Zero-Knowledge Systems and Anonymizer.com.

Also showcased was ‘‘Disappearing Email" developed by Disappearing Inc., a product that lets a user send and receive e-mail that becomes unreadable after a predetermined period.

iPrivacy, which is teamed with the U.S. Postal Service for pilot projects to begin later this year, demonstrated private e-commerce software that lets users surf, shop, receive correspondence and take delivery of goods shielded from the gathering of click data through creation of proxy identities.

American Express displayed a product known as Private Payments that lets cardholders make online purchases using a random, unique number for each transaction.

Microsoft, whose Windows operating system is the face of computing for most users, demonstrated privacy-enhancing cookie management features for coming Internet Explorer Web browser version 5.5.

The enhanced Microsoft cookie controls will prompt users, by default, when a third party -- a site other than that being visited -- attempts to place or read a cookie on the user’s hard drive.

The Senate panel’s staff said it was not endorsing any of the specific technologies detailed in the booklet, which is available at http://judiciary.senate.gov/privacy.htm.

Updates of the booklet are planned and other technology companies are welcome to submit their products for inclusion, the committee staff said.

Privacy Group Slams Web Tracking "Cat"

The Privacy Foundation released a report today criticizing a new Web device that has the ability to track people while they surf.

In an expected blow to the maker of the "CueCat," a digital bar-code scanner being sent to millions of consumers this fall, the Denver-based foundation called for DigitalConvergence to remove a personal tracking

feature within the device. It also asked the company to disclose more details about how information collected will be used.

"The Privacy Foundation has serious privacy concerns with the CueCat," said Richard Smith, a well-known privacy expert and chief technology officer of the foundation. "We are asking the company to fix the service now, before it is in widespread use."

Consumers can use the cat-shaped devices to scan bar codes within articles or advertisements in print and be automatically linked to related Web sites. Hundreds of thousands of the CueCats are being given away to consumers through partners such as RadioShack and Wired and Forbes magazines.

As previously reported, privacy advocates have been investigating the scanner and its ability to snoop on consumers. Researchers say the device makes use of an identifying serial number that could trace the actions of an individual and create a detailed database on a specific device’s usage.

"This puts the company in a very powerful position to track people," Smith said. "And the question is, what happens with your information at the other end?

"Frankly, the company has not been very forthcoming about their practices."

Outcry against the product comes a week after a security breach at DigitalConvergence’s Web site exposed about 140,000 consumers’ names, email addresses and ZIP codes, raising the concern of many new members and privacy advocates.

DigitalConvergence, a privately held company based in Dallas, said it is not tracking personally identifiable information, and customer registration information--which includes name, email address, gender, age and ZIP code--is retained only for the purposes of general demographics.

"There is no personal tracking feature in the device and in our software," said Michael Garin, chief operating officer of DigitalConvergence. "And the only information that we can track is aggregate data. We do not know the identity of any individual in our system."

On the issue of notification, Garin said the company added a pop-up window today that says during the registration period that "we cannot and do not track personal information."

But some have questioned the motives of the company’s subsidiary, DigitalDemographics, which "is responsible for the creation and analysis of the largest consumer database that provides the unique combination of Web tracking with all forms of media," according to its Web site. Information in the database is aggregated data from broadcasters, publishers and educators.

AOL Refutes Instant Messaging Competitors’ Arguments

America Online Inc. accused opponents of the Time Warner Inc. acquisition of trying use the Federal Communications Commission to obtain agreements on

instant messaging software that benefit the rivals.

Peter Ross, an outside lawyer for AOL, told a FCC lawyer during a Sept. 6 conversation that competing makers of software that allows real-time online chats have failed to make the case for conditioning the merger on the issue, according to an FCC filing made available on Friday.

AOL's instant messaging function (AIM) is one of the most popular features on its system and rival services want their clients to be able to chat with AOL subscribers. Standards for interoperability are being developed by a joint task force.

The rivals ''make plain through a litany of remedies they seek that their real grievance is not with potential AOL Time Warner conduct, but with their pre-existing desire to gain interoperability to AIM on their terms," according to a letter describing the discussion with Darryl Cooper, an attorney in the FCC's cable services bureau.

The agency is weighing whether the transfer of media giant Time Warner's broadcast licenses to the world's largest Internet services provider, AOL, is in the public interest.

Instant messaging companies like CMGI Inc.'s Tribal Voice have met with the FCC as well and argued that the agency should force the two companies to allow customers of rival companies to communicate electronically with AOL's users before the merger can be completed.

AOL argued that the FCC has no jurisdiction over instant messaging because the agency does not regulate the Internet and interoperability as a technical matter is a year away.

''There's no way anybody can debate whether instant messaging is a communications service or not. And if it is a communications service, then there certainly is an argument that can be made that the FCC clearly has jurisdiction," said Ross Bagully, chief executive of Tribal Voice.

However, opponents to the merger admit the instant messaging function is an Internet service that is given away for free and ''fail to demonstrate that IM would nonetheless constitute a distinct product market," the AOL letter said.

In a Sept. 5 filing made by Tribal Voice and iCast Corp., they argued that IM capability offered through interactive television, including the recently launched AOL-TV, should be regulated as a cable service.

AOL countered that that argument would force the FCC to regulate e-mail, Internet service and any other feature of interactive television offered over cable lines.

''What we're looking for in instant messaging in reality already exists for e-mail," Bagully said in response. ''Any communications service that is open and interactive works well and the public interest is served."

AOL Subsidiary Program Removes Ads

A subsidiary of America Online is again biting the hand that feeds it, this time creating a program that can remove advertising from AOL's popular

Instant Messenger software.

AIMazing is the latest product from San Francisco-based Nullsoft Inc., whose founder Justin Frankel seems to revel in being a rebellious thorn in his parent company’s side.

The software add-on was available for download on the Nullsoft Web site on Thursday, but AOL, which bought Nullsoft for $86 million last year, downplayed its impact.

‘‘It’s simply a visualization program for users of Winamp and AIM," said AOL spokeswoman, Tricia Primrose. ‘‘The point is moot on this because we don’t have paid ads on the space." Winamp is a computer music player, and AIM is the dominant Internet instant-messaging program, with 64 million users.

AIMazing is the second Nullsoft program this year that would appear to interfere with AOL’s business efforts.

On March 14, Frankel posted Gnutella, a file-sharing program that can be used to freely trade MP3 music files, software and movie clips online.

The unauthorized project was quickly taken offline once AOL got wind of it, but Gnutella’s brief availability provided enough time for people to download it and make it available on dozens of mirror Web sites.

Today, various permutations of Gnutella based on Frankel’s original are widely available on the Internet. Frankel was unavailable for comment Thursday.

Last month, Nullsoft was forced by its parent to deactivate an MP3 search engine on its Web site that allowed users to find and download authorized and unauthorized song files.

Even Nullsoft’s mainstay program, the Winamp MP3 music-playing software, appears to run counter in principle to AOL goals.

AOL is still working to acquire Time-Warner and its vast collection of music publishing resources. But Winamp and Gnutella give computer users the tools to download, trade and play Warner’s music for free.

‘‘It’s very clear that at the same time (Frankel) is embracing (AOL’s) money, he is thumbing his nose at the establishment," said Alan Alper, an analyst with Gomez Advisors in Lincoln, Mass. ‘‘Ultimately, you have to obey the law of whoever is providing the butter for your bread."

AOL will likely put up with Frankel’s mischievous software inventions in order to have access to cutting-edge technology Nullsoft’s developers produce, Alper said.

For its part, AOL wouldn’t talk about its relationship with Frankel, which it called an internal personnel matter.

Pentium 4 to Debut Next Month

Intel will release the Pentium 4 on Oct. 30, according to sources close to the company--not a moment too soon for the battered chipmaker.

The Pentium 4, which will initially come out at 1.4 GHz and 1.5 GHz, will serve as the cornerstone of the company’s processor line for the next several years. The chip will first appear in high-performance desktops, but later migrate to servers, workstations, notebooks and subsequent generations of processors.

Formerly code-named Willamette, the Pentium 4 is based on an entirely new architecture. The Pentium III, Intel’s current flagship, derives from an architecture originally revealed with the Pentium Pro in 1996.

The new chip will give Intel an opportunity to break out of a cycle of product miscues. Since the beginning of last year, the company has lurched from one problem to another, despite growing revenues and profits.

About a year ago, for example, the company had to delay an enhanced version of the Pentium III. When the chip finally came out, demand became overwhelming, and Intel found itself faced with a shortage that continues to linger.

This year, the company had to recall the 1.13-GHz Pentium III as well as budget computers because of a flaw in a chip called the Memory Translator Hub. Other products, including the long-awaited Itanium chip for servers, were delayed. Meanwhile, rival Advanced Micro Devices grabbed market share with its Athlon processor.

The company dropped another bombshell yesterday when it said revenue for the third quarter would be substantially lower than expected, an announcement that has pummeled the company’s stock.

Intel has said the Pentium 4’s "NetBurst" feature will improve how computers handle tasks--such as data encryption or video compression--that have grown in popularity with the Internet.

"It will be the highest-performing processor for PCs," Albert Yu, senior vice president of the Intel Architecture Group, said in a recent presentation on the chip. "We’re moving into streaming video; speech has become much more commonplace than a year ago. Peer-to-peer (networking) has been around for a long time, but it is now being recognized as the computing paradigm of the future."

Overall, the architectural changes will lead to better performance for multimedia applications but incremental improvement with standard desktop applications such as word processing, according to analysts.

"In the short term, there is going to be an incremental improvement, but the big news here is that the P4 is going to give Intel a lot of headroom in the future, not just for the fall but for 2002 and beyond," Linley Gwennap, principal at the Linley Group, said last month.

On the financial side, however, the Pentium 4 won’t be an easy play for Intel. The chip will measure 214 square millimeters, making it more than twice as large as current Pentium IIIs. Generally, the larger a chip is, the more expensive it is to make. Intel will shrink the chip next year.

The company has said it will manufacture "hundreds of thousands" of Pentium 4s this year.

Universities Rebuff Call to Ban Napster

Saying open access to information trumped copyright fears, several major U.S. universities including Stanford and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have rejected a lawyer’s demand they bar students from using the Napster song-swap software, officials said on Friday.

Los Angeles attorney Howard King, who represents recording artists Metallica and Dr. Dre in copyright infringement lawsuits against Napster, sent letters to about a dozen U.S. universities this month asking them to ban access to the wildly popular service from campus computers.

But officials at a number of universities declined the request, saying while they do not condone copyright infringement, they would not take the step of limiting access to the Internet.

‘‘MIT has had a long history of providing its faculty, staff, and students with uncensored access to the Internet and its vast array of resources," James D. Bruce, MIT’s vice president for information systems, said in a letter to King.

‘‘As an educational institution providing its community of users with Internet access, we do not monitor or bar access to use of the Internet."

Stanford concurred, saying it ‘‘was unaware of any requirement that it invade and monitor specific usage by its faculty, students and staff of such online services."

‘‘Be assured that Stanford does not condone copyright infringement, and is mindful that the rapid development of technology poses challenging issues in this regard," William Abrams, a lawyer representing the university, wrote.

He said Stanford would take appropriate action if informed of a specific instance of copyright infringement.

Several other major universities, including Harvard, said they needed more time to determine their position.

The suit brought by Metallica and Dr. Dre is separate from a larger legal action against Napster Inc. by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), which represents some of the top recording companies in the nation, including Seagram Co. Ltd.’s Universal Music, Bertelsmann AG’s BMG, Sony Corp.’s Sony Music and Time Warner Inc.’s Warner Music Group and EMI.

But they both revolve around the question of technology and copyright infringement and have focused in part on college campuses, where students have thronged to online services that allow them to trade personal collections of recordings stored in MP3, a digital compression format used to convert music on CDs into computer files.

A recent study by research firm Gartner Group Inc. found that 34 percent of 50 U.S. colleges and universities surveyed had banned students from using Napster. But other song swap services continue to proliferate.

University administrators have taken different approaches to the issue. Some, including Yale and the University of Indiana, banned access to Napster earlier this year after they were named as co-defendants in the rock musicians’ suit against the service.

But others are resisting, saying they should not be forced to police students' computer use.

''This is not a statement of support for Napster, nor are we condoning copyright infringement," said Bob Harty, a spokesman for Georgia Tech. ''To unilaterally block access to a site is an overly blunt response to this issue and we believe that it constitutes an unwise policy."

While the universities' rebuff marked a temporary setback for Metallica, Dr. Dre, and other recording artists opposed to Napster, the larger question of the song-swap services' future will head back to court soon.

Opening arguments in the RIAA's Napster case have been set for Oct. 2 after the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco stayed a judge's order that would have pulled the plug on the service.

FBI Investigates Missing Laptop

Authorities tried Monday to determine if the suspicious disappearance of a laptop computer belonging to the chief executive officer of Qualcomm Inc. was a simple case of thievery or an act of economic espionage.

Laptops, because of their value and small size, are frequent and obvious targets for theft but the disappearance of a computer belonging to CEO Irwin Jacobs from a hotel conference room in Irvine instantly became a top priority for local authorities, police Lt. Sam Allevato said.

''The possibilities are a random commercial theft all the way to industrial espionage ... and anything in between," Allevato said. ''We're still trying to assess what we have."

The FBI has begun an investigation at the request of Qualcomm executives, said Cheryl Mimura, a spokeswoman for the bureau's Los Angeles office.

Qualcomm declined to comment on the investigation.

The San Diego-based company is a leader in wireless technology - a boom market of the burgeoning telecommunications revolution - with $3.9 billion in revenues last year. It designs and produces chips for wireless communications devices and holds hundreds of patents whose royalties provide it with the bulk of its earnings.

Jacobs left the computer unattended on a podium or an adjoining table in the Hyatt Regency-Irvine ballroom on Saturday for 15-20 minutes when he stepped down to talk to a small group of people after addressing about 90 members of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers.

People with access to the area included journalists and others registered at the conference, hotel staff and possibly others, said Byron Calame, SABEW's president and a deputy managing editor of The Wall Street Journal.

Jacobs told people at the conference that the IBM laptop, which he had used for a slide show-type presentation focusing on Qualcomm's wireless telecommunications technology, contained proprietary information that could be valuable to foreign governments.

Authorities disclosed little about the investigation. Irvine police turned it over to the department’s economic crime unit, which has experience with high-tech theft cases, and planned to meet with Qualcomm security officials on Tuesday, Allevato said.

The case, he added, could turn out to be simple - a thief spotting what appeared to be a quick and easy opportunity. ‘‘Theft of laptops from hotel conference rooms is not an uncommon crime," Allevato said.

First Palm Virus Spreads, Kills Programs

Get ready for a new era in computer vulnerability.

The first virus to infect a handheld organizer was reported on Friday in the form of a tiny file that rummages through Palm Inc. handheld computing devices, ruining their capabilities.

While the virus, called Phage, seems not to have spread widely, one virus expert said he expects the destructive file to be shared among virus writers and given even greater capability to disguise itself and spread.

‘‘It’s the first real virus for any PDA ever, meaning that it actually is a virus with the capability to spread further," said Mikko Hermanni Hypponen, the manager of anti-virus research at Finland-based F-Secure Corp. A PDA is a personal digital assistant.

Other destructive files, called trojan horses, have affected handheld devices, but unlike viruses do not spread as easily.

Hypponen said viruses such as Phage are often disguised as computer games or pornographic images on Internet newsgroups and chatrooms.

‘‘No doubt they’re already sharing the source code for this virus," he said.

A spokesperson for Palm said the company had just heard about Phage and was evaluating its impact.

Phage, which can be downloaded in seconds even from a slow Internet connection, makes the screen go blank for a second as it runs, according to Hypponen, who said the virus was anonymously transmitted to F-Secure.

During that period it attaches virus code to every program on the Palm, though it does not affect database files.

Users can inadvertently spread the virus by transferring applications to other Palm devices through an infrared port.

The only way to return the Palm’s capabilities is to restore programs from a backup -- not a default option on Palm devices -- or to download and re-install all applications.

Data files, such as phone numbers and calendar entries, are by default backed up.

In May, a computer virus dubbed the ‘‘Love Bug" swept the world, shutting down e-mail systems at major companies and government agencies.

The virus spread through email, sending a copy of itself to anyone in a user’s address book.

Hypponen said it is only a matter of time before a similar virus is written for handheld computers, sending malicious programs over wireless Internet connections.

Online Honesty Drops for King Books

As Stephen King prepares to post the third installment of his online serial novel ‘‘The Plant," it appears fewer people fear the horror writer’s threat to pull the plug if they don’t pay.

Most fans are obeying the honor system and sending King $1 for each installment downloaded from his Web site. And some still are sending in extra bucks to cover freeloaders.

But the latest numbers showed that just under 70 percent of those downloading ‘‘The Plant" paid for it. King has set 75 percent as the minimum for him to continue after part three, which will be available on his Web site Monday.

‘‘We’re a little confused about what’s going on with that," said King’s assistant, Marsha DeFilippo.

The story, begun and based in the 1980s, is about a vampire vine that takes over a publishing company.

King’s people still were trying to nail down how many have downloaded the first two parts successfully, so the payment estimate could change. DeFilippo said 172,004 people had paid for part one and 74,373 people had paid for part two by Sept. 13, the last date figures were available. In a message to readers posted on his Web site, King speculates on possible reasons for the decline, including a slip in interest and technical difficulties.

‘‘There is undoubtedly some thievery and bootlegging going on, but Marsha and I believe the real problem may lie elsewhere," King said.

Some readers have downloaded the story two or three times to different formats, such as PCs and handheld electronic organizers, but paid for only one download. Similarly, people have ‘‘lost" the story in computer crashes and downloaded again without paying, DeFilippo said.

Another is that many struggled to download the second part. Though no specific problem was pinpointed, King’s camp has since switched its download company to Amakai Technologies and has eliminated much of the difficulty, DeFilippo said.

E-mails were sent to readers who paid for part one inviting them to take part in a survey about the experience, and 87 percent of the 28,000 people who responded said they didn’t realize part two was available. About 96 percent said they would download part three, she said.

King said part three will be the last if the payment numbers don’t go back up to 75 percent. But there is still hope for hooked readers.

He is considering offering subsequent parts with a pay-first requirement ‘‘as a response to those who have been honest," DeFilippo said. Also, if he continues, the parts will be longer and will cost $2 instead of $1. After part eight, they’ll be free.

King has written through part five and is getting attached to the story.

‘‘He’s gotten excited about it. It’s like visiting an old friend again," DeFilippo said.

Germany Won’t Tax Internet

Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on Monday ruled out a tax on Internet use that critics said would stifle the development of the Web in Germany, Europe’s biggest economy.

In a speech to business leaders, Schroeder quashed a new Finance Ministry rule floated last month to tax businesses every time employees use company computers for private Internet surfing.

‘‘Private use of the Internet in the workplace is tax-free," he said at the World’s Fair in the central town of Hanover. And people who use their own personal computers to log onto the Internet for work are entitled to tax breaks, he said.

Telecommunications and computer firms had criticized the government for the tax plan, arguing that it would be a bureaucratic nightmare that would discourage many people from becoming familiar with the Internet.

Still, the government will push ahead with new rules to protect intellectual property rights, Schroeder said.

Many companies are upset with plans to levy a tax on the makers of equipment such as high-speed modems and CD-burners that can be used to copy protected material. The proceeds would go to rights holders such as pop stars and authors.

Schroeder stressed the government’s commitment to seeing every school online by the end of next year, even though only one in three schools currently has access to the Web. He said more adults - especially the jobless - must learn about the Internet.

Government and industry leaders have been scrambling to solve a chronic shortage of skilled workers in the country’s information technology sector, a key source of new jobs in a country struggling to shake off high unemployment even during an economic upswing.

As a short-term measure, the government is trying to attract foreign computer experts by offering 20,000 temporary work permits.

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